

The Times

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FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1902.

THE DUTY TO PAY TAXES.

The Staunton News, which is an honest and fearless newspaper, says in a recent editorial article that it is plain to the public of that community that there are many persons in Staunton who are not paying all their taxes. "The idea has become common," it proceeds, "that people are not expected to give in their property at its full market value, but that it ought to be given in at sixty per cent. or something like that."

Moreover, it says that when it comes to the income tax a great many ignore that altogether, because they do not understand it or try to understand it. They know that there are some exemptions and they roughly estimate that these cover about all their income, which, the News says, is erroneous.

Some property owners dodge the tax assessor with a full knowledge of the fact that they are dishonestly concealing some of their taxable possessions. Others fail to give in a full assessment, because, as the News says, they do not understand. But we believe that the State itself is responsible for much of the tax dodging complained of. Our tax laws have been unfair in some respects and uncertain in others, and the State has rather encouraged men to conceal because it has attempted to levy taxes upon that which is not in fact property. Men will not tolerate double taxation. The first thing for any State to do is to have a tax system that is fair and just; that imposes a tax upon all property once, but only once, and when that system has been established it is a comparatively simple matter to get at all the taxable values of the State and to prevent men from dodging. Our new Constitution makes a long stride in the direction of such a system, and we believe that hereafter there will be less and less of complaints on this score.

In conclusion we would concur in the doctrine preached by our Staunton contemporary that it is the duty of every citizen—his patriotic duty, his duty to society and to God—to give in for taxation all the actual property that he owns. When the State levies a fair and just tax upon a citizen it is his duty to pay it. It is an obligation upon him, as surely as any other obligation, and no honest and patriotic man will dodge it. It is a great mistake for rich men to withhold from the government that which is justly due, and so defy the law. Rich men, of all others, are interested in laws that protect property, and when they set the example of disobeying and defying the law they cannot reasonably expect others less favorably situated to do better than they. The surest way for rich men to get the full protection of the law which they so much need is for them to obey the law honestly and devoutly, to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. If rich men would all do this conscientiously there would be less of prejudice against them, and fewer attempts would be made to enact laws detrimental to their interests. To put it on the lowest and most selfish ground, honesty in all such cases is the best policy for the rich.

ROOSEVELT'S SINCERITY.

It is very proper to rebuke President Roosevelt for his harsh and unjust comments upon the character of President Jefferson Davis. Mr. Davis was a noble man and gave his life as a sacrifice to the cause in which he steadfastly believed. No man has the right to impeach his motives, and the time will come when the whole world will recognize him as a true patriot, as all the South knew him to be.

On the other hand, we think it unfair to say that President Roosevelt was insincere in his kind allusions to the Southern people generally upon his recent visit to Charleston. There was a time when most Southerners regarded Abraham Lincoln as a bad man, and he was known to the Southern children as a monster. They sung of him as that "ugly old baboon," and we all believed that he was the arch enemy of the South. Yet only a few days ago, in a Southern city, an audience composed of Southern men and women heartily applauded a tribute which was paid by a speaker to this same Abraham Lincoln.

Time works wondrous changes, and, paradoxical as it may seem, we often see clearer from a distance in our estimate of men. After all these years Southern people see that there was good in Mr. Lincoln, as Northern people see that there was good in Mr. Davis. Like all the rest of us, Mr. Roosevelt's vision becomes clearer as he grows older, and since he has learned to know the Southern people better, we doubt not that his opinion of Mr. Davis has materially changed for the better.

A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT.

We print elsewhere a communication from Mr. William R. Miller, proctor of the University College of Medicine, of Richmond, in which he says that that institution has encouraged the students to make suggestions to the faculty as to the best method, from the student's point of view, of conducting the affairs of the institution. Mr. Miller says that the experiment has proved eminently successful and intimates that the University will continue it from session to session.

Mr. Miller's communication is in reply to an editorial article recently appearing in The Times, in which we suggested the common sense of giving the students of our educational institutions a voice in the management. We are gratified to know that this has been in a measure done in a Richmond college and that the plan has proven to be satisfactory to both

sides.

There is an underlying principle here which is not to be overlooked. We are a democracy and the principle of democracy should rule in all our affairs of whatever character. The student body in any institution of learning stands in much the same relation to the faculty that the people stand toward the Government. Of course, it will not do to permit the students to govern as the people govern, for students are young and inexperienced and sometimes indiscreet. But every American youth worthy of the name is a good Democrat in the broad sense of that term, and Democrats are not apt to abuse a trust.

American manhood implies independence and self-reliance and self-control, and in the training of the American youth everything should be done to develop these qualities. We believe in the honor-system at college. Wherever it has been tried in the Southern colleges it has operated well. It is a good thing to put a young man on his honor, on his dignity, on his responsibility, and it would add greatly to the dignity and responsibility of student life to give the students, as we have said, some voice in the management. There should be regular conferences between the students and the faculty and the students should be urged to make suggestions here and there, and all such suggestions should have the most careful consideration of the faculty. Nothing, in our opinion, would more surely promote the esprit de corps of an educational institution.

DANGER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat complains that ex-Governor Stone of Missouri recently made a stump speech in New London, which the school children of the town, under command of their teachers, were compelled to hear. "For two hours," we are told, "they were made to listen to Mr. Stone's partisan talk."

This incident is worthy of the most serious consideration of the American people, for it is significant of a lurking danger in our public-school system. It is not necessary for The Times to say that it is heartily in favor of public-school education; but much as we appreciate the value and importance of educating the children of the land, we think more of American manhood and American independence than we do of mere "book learning."

"The friends of popular education must not close their eyes to the fact that it is a dangerous thing for the government to undertake to educate and mould the character of the rising generation. Let the children of this land be reared by representatives of the government and teach them that the government owns them, body and soul, and that they must look to the government for their opinions and their support, and it will not be many generations before Democracy will be a thing of the past. The idea of taking a lot of school children by the throat, so to speak, and forcing them to listen to the partisan speech of a professional politician is enough to arouse the resentment of every free and independent and liberty-loving citizen of this Union."

Let us educate the children of the land and let us do all that we can to make them good and upright and cultivated men and women. But let us never educate out of them the spirit of American independence. If we do popular education will be the greatest curse that was ever inflicted upon this country.

The plan adopted by the Democratic State Committee at Richmond several months ago, and ordered to be put in force at once, provided explicitly and without any exceptions or reservations that "ALL VOTING SHALL BE VIVA VOCE."

We would like to know if the various city and county committees intend to conform to this rule made by the State Committee, and if so, when they are going to begin. The rule was first ignored at Lynchburg and then at Richmond, and more recently in Norfolk. It is a mandatory party law, made for good and sufficient reasons, by direction of the Democratic State Convention, and it ought to be observed.—Lynchburg News.

It is a matter of very serious doubt with us if the viva voce plan of voting will ever be again popular in Virginia, especially in primary elections. It is very embarrassing to many voters to go to the polls and publicly declare their choice as between candidates with all of whom they are equally friendly. The effect of this plan, if adopted, will, in our belief, have the effect of keeping a great many Democrats away from the polls when primary elections are held.

Colonel William Rison, of Danville, whose death was announced yesterday, was one of the most remarkable men ever reared in that section of the State. For twenty-five years he was clerk of the Corporation Court, and no one was able to defeat him for the position. He was re-elected even after he was seventy-five years of age, and he discharged the duties of his office until about a year ago, when he resigned on account of ill health. He was one of the best clerks in the State and deservedly one of the most popular. He was always courteous and accommodating, and it was a pleasure to do business with him. He was noted for his courtly manners and especially for his civility. No man could be more deferential to women than Colonel Rison, and in this respect, as in all others, he was an exemplar for young men. He was a thorough Southern gentleman of the old school, a loyal citizen, a devout churchman and altogether lovable. It is with a sense of personal loss that we record his death.

Our esteemed contemporary, the Fredericksburg Free Lance, announces that increased demands upon its advertising columns has necessitated an enlargement of the paper to eight pages. This is the first time in the history of the paper that its advertisers have required so large an increase of space. But the Free Lance is a hustler and Fredericksburg, like all other Virginia towns, is enjoying a season of unprecedented prosperity. There is no better index to the push and progress and prosperity of any community than its local newspapers. Every such paper is a standing advertisement of the section it represents, and outsiders estimate the business of the community by the quality and quantity of the advertisements of local concerns. This is a fact which the

people of every community may well take to heart.

The Suffolk Herald has issued an industrial paper which does credit to that esteemed contemporary and the enterprising town and community it represents. Newspaper men particularly are pleased to see the portrait and editorial sketch of the late J. E. Booker, who was in his life owner and editor. Mr. Booker was very dear to the newspaper profession, and his brethren heartily approve any and every tribute that may be paid to his memory. The Herald is one of the best weekly newspapers in the State, and we are glad to see that it has held up to Editor Booker's high standard.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Sol. Smith Russell.

Sol Smith Russell, who died in Washington yesterday, was one of the most original and delightful of American writers. The place on the stage thus left vacant will not be easily filled. It is only necessary to see some of the other comedians who have appeared in his parts since his illness to realize how unique and exquisite his talent was. He has had imitators; but they were far off from the exactness of his performance and spoke the lines, and were even sometimes amusing; but they were really little like Mr. Russell.

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